

Committee **Cabinet**

Date: **3 August 2004**

Title: **Best Value Review Programme 2004 – 2006**

From: **Director of Law and Performance Management**

Purpose: **To agree the programme of best value reviews**

Recommendation

To comment on and agree the Best Value review programme for 2004 - 2006

1. Financial appraisal

1.1 The proposed programme of Best Value reviews will be delivered within available budget. The total budget for 2004/2005 for best value and scrutiny activities is £280,000

1.2 The budget also supports the work of Health Overview and Scrutiny although the county council's partners in the boroughs and districts each make a contribution of £5,400 to the overall costs.

2. Introduction

2.1 It has been the normal practice for Cabinet to agree a programme of best value reviews preceding the start of the programme. In March 2003, the Cabinet agreed a three year programme of reviews which took into account the outcomes of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). The programme for the year 2003/2004 has been completed

2.2 It is now appropriate for the programme for 2004/2005 to begin. However, a number of factors have led to the need to propose a change to the final two years of the original agreed three year programme. The original 2003/2006 programme is attached as Appendix 1

3. Reason for a change to the 2004/2005 programme

3.1 The original three year programme was proposed to mirror the Audit & Inspection Plan which linked to the Improvement Plan. This allowed a more flexible approach to the use of reviews, to tackle issues and priorities as they arose, than the previous five-year programme. However, as agreed by Cabinet in March 2003 it was the intention to evaluate the programme in 2004 and make any necessary additions or revisions.

3.2 It is proposed to remove Planning and Partnership for Better Services from the programme. Community planning and partnership working were key elements in the CPA which was undertaken in all districts and boroughs in the county earlier this year. It does not, therefore, appear appropriate to suggest districts and boroughs work with the

county council on a full best value review of this area at this time, as was envisaged when the programme of best value reviews was originally prepared. The District Auditor has, however, been asked to carry out a study into the extent to which the priorities in community plans are reflected in partners' business plans. The results of this study will be reported to members when available.

4. The Best Value Review Programme for 2004/2006 proposals

4.1 The identified reviews below are being proposed after consideration of departmental improvement activities and consideration of the Council's Improvement Plan. The number of reviews per year remains the same so that members and scrutiny support officers' time can be effectively and efficiently used between the more extensive best value reviews and more intensive and shorter scrutiny activities.

4.2 The scope of Best Value reviews in the remaining two year programme continues to have an emphasis on looking more directly at the needs and demands of residents of East Sussex. This approach is centred initially on consultation and comparison. The ability to deliver better services will then be measured through the competition and challenge elements of the best value process.

4.3 It is proposed to retain the review of 'increasing local provision for adults with learning difficulties' as planned, and replace 'planning and partnership for better services', for the reasons stated in paragraph 3.2, with a review looking at the way in which 'sustainable communities' are being promoted.

4.4 The review around sustainable communities will focus on the some of the main components which contribute to making sustainable communities – economy, environmental, social and cultural and services. The County Council has a major role in building sustainable communities but currently there is work to be done on definitions and indicators of what the term 'sustainable communities' means and comprises in the East Sussex context.

4.5 For the County Council the notion of sustainable communities will be a key line of enquiry in the corporate assessment of the CPA. This review will support that process and will measure progress towards the achievement of greater sustainability in the defined components. The Audit Commission has indicated that the new CPA Framework will take greater account of local priorities. One important role for the review will be to identify and define what a sustainable East Sussex County will look like.

The proposed programme is therefore:

Review Area	2003-2004	2004 - 2005	2005 - 2006
Improving attendance in schools (Education)	● COMPLETED		
Improving road travel across the County (T & E)	● COMPLETED		
Promoting sustainable communities (Chief Execs) <i>Key line of enquiry in corporate assessment of CPA</i>		●	
Increasing local provision for adults with learning disabilities (Soc. Serv) <i>Council Improvement Plan – Joint SSI review</i>		●	
Better access to integrated services for older people (Soc, Serv) Council Improvement Plan – Joint SSI School Improvement Services – improving standards for pupils (Education) <i>Council Improvement Plan Priority – Raise educational standards (BVPIs 38, 39, 40, 41, 48, 159, 181, 194)</i>			● ●

5. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation

5.1 The view of the Audit & Best Value Scrutiny Committee, together with the chairmen of scrutiny committees, will be sought on the proposed review programme for 2004/2005 and reported to the Cabinet.

5.2 The proposed programme of Best Value reviews aims to support the Council's priorities for improvement.

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Appendix One - Original Best Value Review Programme 2003/2006

Review Area	2003-2004	2004 - 2005	2005 - 2006
<p>Improving attendance in schools (Education) <i>Council Improvement Plan Priority – Raise education standards (also PSA target)</i> (BVPIs 45, 46, 159)</p> <p>Improving road travel across the County (T & E) <i>Council Improvement Plan Priority – Highways, making roads better</i> (BVPIs 96, 97, 99, 100, 165, 186,187)</p>	<p>●</p> <p>● (Start date – January 2004)</p>		
<p>Planning and partnership for better services(Chief Execs) <i>Council Improvement Plan Priority – an integrated , enhancing authority</i> (BVPI 1)</p>		●	
<p>Increasing local provision for adults with learning disabilities (Soc. Serv) <i>Council Improvement Plan – Joint SSI review</i></p>		●	
<p>Better access to integrated services for older people (Soc, Serv) <i>Council Improvement Plan – Joint SSI</i></p>			●
<p>School Improvement Services – improving standards for pupils (Education) <i>Council Improvement Plan Priority – Raise educational standards</i> (BVPIs 38, 39, 40, 41, 48, 159, 181, 194)</p>			●